Part 3

river stories

pet·ro·glyph \ˈpe-tre-ˌglif\ n [F pétroglyphe, fr. pét- pet- + -glyph (as in hiéroglyphe hieroglyph)] (1870) : a carving or inscription on a rock.

A rubbing of a petroglyph along the Galisteo River
A River Flows Through

Abby Moquino’s
8th Grade Students
Santa Fe Indian School
River Stories
May, 1993
A River Flows Through

Background Information:

This lesson was begun to encourage students to record and write about the history of their people, to record and practice storytelling since the stories have been passed down through the families for hundreds of years. The students saw it as a personal mission to record these stories for future generations. There were some students who did not have the traditional stories so they wrote their own based on their experiences or on current events. The students that I teach come from a traditional, oral educational system. Therefore, I use them as a resource to share with us what they have learned from their families and tribes. This booklet is to be used only in the classroom and should not be copied for further distribution.

Front Cover:

The cover design was drawn by Earl Valencia. The serpent is represented in many stories throughout the Pueblos of New Mexico. The Rio Grande is the home of the serpent. It is a strong, religious symbol that represents creation and a balance in the life of our people. The symbol is represented in various aspects of pueblo life but most notably in the pottery and jewelry designs.

Dedication:

My father would tell me, ”Do it for the children. Teach them the non-Indian way of life but remind them never to forget their own way of life.” This book is dedicated to my father and my students who wrote the stories.

Abby Moquino
Cochiti – St. Domingo Pueblos
May 1993
20th Century La Llorona

Long time ago there lived this lady. She was the most beautiful woman in her village. All the men wanted to go with her. Her name was Maria. One day this one dude came into her village and when she saw this she was like “Oh check out the dude that rode in.” He thought she was good too so he tried to get her attention, but she played stupid. Finally she got to meet him in person so they started going together. A couple of years later they got married and had kids. After that her dude went out on her and married some other chick. Maria found out and divorced her dude. Her dude would come by once in a while just to see the kids. Maria had got jealous and threw her kids in the river. When she realized what she had done the kids were long gone. People say that she roams the river looking for her kids.

Teri Toledo
S.F.I.S
8th Grade
Bathing in the River

One day there was a little boy who was going to dance for his very first time on his feast day. He was around 3 or 4 years old and he was very excited to dance on the big feast day. When the day finally came his older brothers, uncles, and his dad went down to the river early in the morning. The little boy asked them why they were at the river and they told him that they had to bathe in the river, so they would be strong when they were dancing and they had to pray that their day would be good. The little boy said that the water was too cold to bathe in, but his dad told him if he prayed to the spirits the water wouldn't be cold, so that's what the boy did.

After the day was over his dad said they had to go bathe again and of course the boy asked why. The father told him that they had to pray to the spirits and thank them for the wonderful feast day they had and they would also return what they used from the earth, like the evergreens.

In our pueblo the men and ladies go down to the river to wash and pray that everything goes right and to help them to be strong during the day. After they finish dancing they go again to say thanks for helping them and also to return the things they used from mother earth. That is the way we show respect to the river in our pueblo.

Melissa Romancito
April 27, 1993
S.F.I.S.
My River Story

When I was a little girl, my dad use to tell me stories about the river. This is how the story goes: Everyday from morning to dusk, my dad had to go to the fields and work. On the way to the fields he had to cross the river in order to get to the fields. The river was very deep back then. He said it covered him from his head to his toe. He always told me he was scared to cross it. He and his brothers had to go to the fields everyday in the morning and cross it and then cross it again to go home. That was one of the stories he told.

Another story he use to tell me what that the old pueblo of Santo Domingo was flooded by the Rio Grande. The old pueblo was to the south of the present pueblo. The Rio Grande was a big river in the past. Our ancestors would go to the river to get water and take it back home. Well one day the Grande got too big and over flooded. The pueblo was gone and the people had to move north and make a new life for themselves. This is how our present pueblo was formed.

These are just some of the stories my dad use to tell me and I figured I’ld tell them to you too.

By Analydia Pacheco, 8th grade
Santa Fe Indian School
River Story

My experience with the river is when you get your Indian name, they bathe you in the river. I was about two and a half years old when I received my Indian name. I remember the water was so cold, but after awhile it turned warm.

Now my Indian name is "gawatawesta" which means a sacred dancer. I think about it sometimes and tell myself it was worth it.

Shelley Histia
April 27, 1993
Santa Fe Indian School
THE SERPENT IN
THE RIVER

One day some kids were playing in the Rio Grande. They were swimming and having some fun, until the kids saw something. It was a serpent. The kids went to go tell the leaders of the village. The village leaders could not believe it but it was true. They started talking to the serpent in their language. They found out that the serpent had lived there for many years. The serpent was nice. The kids used to go see the serpent everyday. Until, one day the serpent just disappeared. The people of the village went to the river. They never found it. Then, it came back a couple of years later. It told the leaders that it had went to San Idelfonso to go see its other people. The serpent was too old to go up to the top of the river and talk to the people anymore because it was too hard for him because he was too old. He told them that he will watch Santa Clara Pueblo. So he lives in the river that is in Santa Clara. The people today carve the serpent in their pottery because the serpent became a sacred thing. Our pueblo design is the serpent. Ever since the day the village people saw the serpent.

By: Paula Gutierrez, 8th Grade
Santa Fe Indian School
SHADOW PUPPETS: A RIVER PLAY

1. In a small group, decide on a story you would like to tell about the Rio Grande.
2. Make shadow puppets to represent your characters.
3. After constructing your puppets and rehearsing your tale, perform it for the class. Use any sound effects you like—make this a truly multi-media production.

HOW TO MAKE SHADOW PUPPETS— IN 10 MINUTES!

You will need: Poster board, pencil, scissors, X-acto knife, newspapers, colored cellophane, brads, tape, hot glue gun, bamboo shishkabab skewers, chopsticks.

Draw a simple, good-sized shape (3” - 6”) on poster board and carefully cut it out. Using the hot glue gun, place a large dot of glue on the center of the back of the cut-out shape. Push the skewer (or a chopstick) down in the center of the glob of glue and hold the stick perpendicular to the cut-out until the glue hardens to support the stick: Your shadow puppet is ready for action!

Some Shadow Puppet Variations

Place cut-out on top of a small pile of newspapers. Use the X-acto knife to cut out small areas within the shape so that light will shine through the holes. (This will make your puppet figure more interesting to look at.)

Cover small areas of your cut-out (e.g. mouth, eyes, feathers, scales, etc.) with colored cellophane (or colored transparent plastic from binder divisions) taped to the back of the puppet. (This adds variety).

Arms, legs, wings and other potentially moveable parts may be cut from separate pieces of poster board and joined to the puppet’s body with brads. By gluing a second skewer to the end of the moveable part you have a handle to move the puppet’s appendages back and forth.
How to Make a Shadow Puppet Theater

You will need: a large cardboard (refrigerator or packing) box, X-acto knife, straight-edged ruler, stapler, masking tape, a piece of thin cotton or nylon fabric large enough to cover the hole you will cut in the box.

Lay the box down horizontally. Cut off the back side of the box. Next, cut out a large rectangular hole in the front, leaving cardboard all around the opening. (This hole will be a little smaller than the piece of fabric—e.g. 30” x 50”).

Now staple the middle of the top edge of fabric to the inside middle of the long cardboard border. Continue to staple the top edge of fabric to the inside border of the top part of the cardboard. Then pull the cloth tight and staple the bottom edge of the fabric to the inside of the bottom border. Repeat with each side of cloth, stapling fabric to form a tight covering for the entire rectangular hole. This becomes the shadow puppet screen, or scrim.

Place the theater on a long table. Position a light—a floor lamp or goose-necked table lamp—behind the theater. Tape the base of the table lamp to the table. Also tape the cord to the table leg as well as to the floor to avoid tipping over the light source.

To perform, stand behind the scrim. Place puppet against scrim. Practice moving puppets, without getting in front of the light (which casts a shadow).
We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

T.S. Eliot